

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

April 10, 2000 LB 1213

**SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:** Senator Beutler, you have about a minute and a half, and then yours is the next light.

**SENATOR BEUTLER:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this is extremely hard to deal with, I think. I want to try to find some balance, and I want to be sensitive to the problem, and I don't want to discourage the process. And yet, a couple of years ago we made an agreement as to a certain amount of General Fund money that would help for this purpose. And now we're adding a very substantial additional amount to it. I don't know if the commitment of the Legislature is for all of the General Fund money it takes to consolidate and unify schools. Is that our commitment? Or is it a commitment to help out with some general sales and income tax money, for at least a portion of it, and kind of let the chips fall where they may as far as what the obligation is? I just kind of sigh, because we are so committed to the incentive side of encouraging people to do things, not just here, but in a broad array of things.

**SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:** Senator Beutler, you're now on your next five minutes.

**SENATOR BEUTLER:** All right. And while as a general proposition it sure beats the stick to encourage people to do what they should be doing but, on the other hand, how much of this incentive kind of government can we afford? Because this certainly...the more we do this, the more it drives up sales and income tax. And something like consolidation, for example, hopefully, and I believe usually does, results in savings to the local people. And yet what we're saying is, we're going to give you sales and income tax money in order for you to save money on your property taxes. Shouldn't they be doing that anyway? Why are we giving them money to do what's going to benefit them in terms of saving property taxes anyway? I mean, I think there's a philosophic question here that begs for some kind of compromise. And especially when we start to hear stories that the consolidation and unification that's being looked at is being looked at from the point of view of creating sparse and very sparse districts, which then get an economic advantage, of course, in the state aid formula, that causes additional, legitimate I think, concern. Senator Schrock, let me ask you a question.